

REMARKS

Claims 9-17 are presented for consideration, with Claim 9 being independent.

Independent Claim 9 has been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. In addition, an editorial change has been made to Claim 11.

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended toward their representative during the personal interview of April 29, 2003. The interview focused primarily on independent Claim 9 and the art applied to the claims, i.e., Spindt '117 and Cathey '226.

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to Claim 9 serve to further distinguish Applicants' invention from these patents, which are currently being relied upon to reject the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Claim 9 relates to an image forming apparatus comprised of a first plate including electron-emitting devices, a second plate having a fluorescent member forming a substantially rectangular region, with the second plate being disposed to face the first plate, and a plurality of spacers disposed between the first plate and the second plate. The spacers are disposed substantially in parallel with each other and each have a longitudinal axis extending in the lengthwise direction thereof. In addition, an outer frame hermetically surrounds a space between the first and second plates, and a getter is disposed between the first plate and the second plate and within the space. The getter is proximate to a side of the outer frame as positioned across an imaginary extension of the spacers in the longitudinal axis direction. As amended, Claim 9 sets forth that the spacers are disposed so that the longitudinal axis of each spacer is substantially parallel to a longer side of the rectangular region of the fluorescent member.

As will be appreciated, the image forming apparatus of Applicants' invention positions the getter proximate to a side of the outer frame that is positioned across an imaginary extension of the spacers in their longitudinal axis direction. The spacers themselves are positioned so that their longitudinal axis is substantially parallel to a longer side of the rectangular region of the fluorescent member. Placing the getter in this manner allows the image forming apparatus to be efficiently evacuated and sealed.

The primary citation to Spindt relates to an image forming apparatus that includes first and second plates and spacers 20 disposed between the first and second plates. As acknowledged, Spindt does not disclose a getter as provided in Applicants' claimed invention.

The secondary citation to Cathey was cited to compensate for the deficiencies in Spindt. Cathey shows an image forming apparatus that includes a getter, i.e., conductive metal wire 21, disposed between the first and second plates and proximate to a side of an outer frame. With reference to Figure 1, the getter is disposed proximate to a side of the outer frame which is positioned parallel to a protective shield 28. Cathey discloses the use of spacer support structures but does not depict any such structures. Cathey, therefore, cannot be said to suggest or teach the getter being proximate to the side of the outer frame which is across an imaginary extension of the spacers.

As discussed at the personal interview, the Examiner relies on the disclosure in Cathey that the getter can be disposed anywhere in the vacuum chamber as long as it does not interfere with the operation of the emitter tips 13 (see column 3, lines 36-38). It is respectfully submitted, however, that this teaching is not sufficient to place a getter in the manner set forth in Applicants' claimed invention. Conventionally, getters are placed along a longer side of the

frame, closest to the gas source and running parallel with the length of the spacers. Although Cathey does not show which direction the spacers run, it is submitted that the spacers would run in the longer direction of a field emission display, which would be parallel to the shield 28.

In Applicants' claimed invention, on the other hand, the getter is not placed along a side parallel to the spacers, but proximate to a side of the outer frame that is positioned across an imaginary extension of the spacers, i.e., the outer wall perpendicular to the spacers. Applicants have discovered that placing the getter in this way provides better conductance. It is submitted that the even though Cathey discloses that the getter can be disposed "anywhere," the placement of the getter would be based on the teachings of Cathey, i.e., along the long side of the frame (and parallel to the longitudinal direction of the spacers).

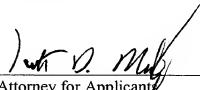
Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination of Spindt and Cathey, even if proper, still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention, and thus reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claim 9 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 10-17 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Due consideration and prompt passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C.
office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our
below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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